LABOUR MONTHLY

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EDITOR · R PALME DUTT

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R. P. D.

Europe Today (iii)
Leslie J. Solley, M.P.
J. P. W. Mallalieu, M.P.

The Fight for Freedom
Ivor Montagu

The Virtuous Spiral
Elinor Burns

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*Lessons of the Crisis**

NOTHING can be the same again in Britain since the days of February, 1947. In the January issue of this journal we wrote of "The New Battle for Britain" which was opening:—

> The fight that is now opening is a fight to save Britain: to end a course which leads to bankruptcy; to end the burdens of an imperialist policy which is strangling recovery; to carry through the home reconstruction which is imperative; it is a fight for the economic and political future of Britain, for the employment and standards of the people, for the lives of men and women and the young generation which is now growing up.

By February the analogy of the Battle of Britain had become the threadbare commonplace of every newspaper. The blast of fuel and power shortage and temporary industrial dislocation had dealt a body-blow to all complacency. In the midst of urgent production needs millions were rendered temporarily unemployed. Seldom could any industrial dispute have caused such an interruption of production. In this painfully vivid fashion was demonstrated the inadequacy of the measures so far adopted to tackle the urgent problems of reconstruction and Britain's economic position. An exceptionally acute symptom of the deeper crisis laid bare the weakness at the heart of Britain's industrial structure and whipped up universal consciousness of the depth and gravity of the crisis. On every side the lessons of the emergency are now being drawn. But it is important that the correct lessons should be drawn, and that they should be adequate to the disease.

The Hour of Awakening

The great debate on Britain's crisis has begun—but it is still only in the first stages. At last there is a general awakening to the seriousness of the position. The year began with the Government's preliminary White Paper on production, which for the first time openly recognised that "the position of Great Britain is extremely serious." Then came the fuel crisis to sharpen the awakening and underline the urgency of the situation. In the first onset of alarm some Government Ministers began to speak of the menace of "catastrophe." A Cabinet Minister was capable of declaring on the platform that "if we don't succeed in overcoming this situation, the Labour Government will fail, and there will be an end to any idea of Socialism in our time." It would be tempting to quote the realistic warnings of the Communist Party over a year ago, at a time when Ministers were indulging in speeches of rosewater and sunshine. When Arthur Horner at the

* These Notes were written before the publication of the Government's Second White Paper, "*Economic Survey for* 1947" and before the Communist Party Congress. Printing difficulties due to the power cuts have delayed production.

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Trades Union Congress predicted a million unemployed by winter as a result of coal shortage, unless emergency steps were taken, few would have ventured to suggest that the grim outcome would prove his figures an under-statement. But, whatever the political lessons which will finally have to be drawn from the experience of the past eighteen months, the urgent need now is to concentrate on the practical problem before us.

Working Class Response

For in fact the immediate outcome of the emergency has been very different from the sanguine calculations in which Toryism and the big moneyed interests indulged. Toryism anticipated an immediate uprush of feeling against the Government for the political benefit of Toryism and its eventual come-back. But the first outcome has dealt a check to these calculations. The Government has been galvanised into a measure of activity. Emergency steps, which six months ago the Communists had been alone in advocating, and which, if adopted in time, could have prevented the present extreme dislocation, were hastily put into operation. The powerful and impressive response of the working-class transformed the political atmosphere from attempted Tory exploitation of the Government's embarrassment to a strengthened revival of labour solidarity and militancy. The inept spluttering of Toryism to stir up discontent, disruption and defeatism, proved a damp squib. But this does not mean that there is not widespread criticism of the policies, or lack of policy, which helped to precipitate the present crisis, and a growing demand for major changes of policy which are now necessary.

White Papers and Black Facts

At the time of writing the second White Paper on Britain's economic position is not yet available. But it is to be hoped that it will give a truer picture of the problem than the first. Statistical details are of limited value, if they are divorced from policy, present only half the facts, and ignore the main features of the problem. The first White Paper may have emanated from the Ministry of Labour, but it was the voice and demands of Big Business that sounded through it. It assumed without argument all the worldwide imperialist commitments as a natural god-given dispensation, and then complained of the shortage of man-power. It assumed the squandering of the bulk of Britain's foreign exchange on military adventures and the subsidising of reaction and the black market abroad, and then complained of the size of the consequent deficit, and demanded as the only solution the expansion of British exports to a degree beyond the immediate prospective capacity of the world market, crippling to home development, and without consideration of the intensified offensive of American competition. It ignored the soaring rise of profits and capital appreciation, far beyond the level of any rise of money wages, and concentrated the limelight entirely on the rise of money wages, without allowing for the rise in prices, and implied

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the conclusion that the only way to lower costs and prevent inflation was to hold up any further rise in wages or improvement of conditions until the general productive level had increased.

Exploiting the Crisis

Nor can we fail to note the attempts now being made in many quarters to exploit the present fuel crisis and the atmosphere of urgency generated by the crisis, in order to endeavour to put through the selfsame reactionary policies of the big capitalist interests which were already being pushed in January prior to the crisis. No more increases of wages; no more demands for shorter hours; curtailment of social services—these are the demands now being put forward as the grand solvents of the crisis. The crisis is seen as the heaven-sent opportunity, which, even if it has not produced the desired results in the political field, is to produce them in the economic field. The working-class is to be rewarded for its unstinted and self-sacrificing response to the needs of the crisis by a new offensive to lower its standards, while the waste of fantastic profits and empire squandermania continues unchecked. Nor do these demands come only from big business quarters. A Government Minister, J. W. Belcher, Parliamentary Secretary of the Board of Trade, thought fit to declare on February 16:—

> This is not a time for easy living. I appeal to unions to postpone demands for shorter hours and higher wages.

And a Labour M.P., Stanley Evans, an employer and ardent supporter of Bevinism, went further to declare:—

> Should not the labour movement ask itself if this was the time to raise the school-leaving age or to agitate for the forty-hour week? In normal times a prolongation of education and a forty-hour week would both be practical politics, but we did not live in normal times.

It is necessary to warn the Government that the working-class, which responded with such outstanding solidarity to defend the Government against the Tory attack and meet the urgent needs of the crisis, is not disposed to retreat before the demands of the big employers, or to allow to continue unchallenged the reactionary policies which are the major factor in the responsibility for the crisis. Toryism's amateurish, incompetent and spiteful propaganda attempts to exploit the crisis, without sign or suggestion of any constructive policy, can only arouse contempt. But this does not mean that the Government's statements, as given in the White Paper or ministerial speeches, can be accepted as adequate. On the contrary, it is their very inadequacy, their obstinate blind eye to the main ruling factors of the present situation, which gives the greatest cause for alarm.

None So Blind

Public opinion is here, as often, in front of the official pundits. Public opinion has begun to see the connection between home policy and foreign policy. Public opinion has begun to see the connection between the delayed demobilisation of soldiers overseas and the

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crucial shortage of man-power at home. Public opinion has begun to see the connection between soaring profits and the demand to freeze wages, or subsidies poured out for foreign reaction and overseas imperialist commitments and the desperate demands to go short and raise exports to bridge the deficit. All this is not faced, it is not answered, it is just blandly ignored by the official statements. The controversy is in some ways comparable to the great controversy over the Second Front during the war. Then, also, public opinion was in front of the official pundits. Public opinion overwhelmingly backed the demand for the speediest opening of the Second Front in the West in order to hasten victory. All the official pundits and bigwigs from press and platform lectured the poor ignorant, gullible public and the amateur strategists of the Communist Party for daring to poke their noses into matters which could only be decided with full knowledge by the military experts. Post-war revelations have disclosed that public opinion was right and the official mentors who lectured them were wrong. The military experts were in favour of the Second Front; the opposition was political, and was based on the aim to throw the brunt of the war on the Soviet Union and retain the Western troops for counter-revolutionary purposes after the war. So today also public opinion is in front of the official mentors. Britain's economic problem is not only an economic problem. It is a political problem. It is a problem of major policy. It is not only a problem of industry and production and sweating harder to get imports. It is a problem of the best use of Britain's man-power and resources; of the total policy of the Government, which includes foreign and imperial policy as well as home economic policy. The different aspects cannot be judged correctly in isolation, but must be seen and judged as a whole. And it is this cardinal principle of Britain's economic problem to which all the official statements so far given remain obstinately blind.

Boomerang

For the past year and a quarter we have been dinning away month after month at the theme that foreign policy finally governs economic policy—that a spendthrift reactionary interventionist foreign policy can wreck all schemes of social reconstruction and lead to economic disaster. It is now appropriate to point out that the resultant economic weakness can finally wreck the foreign policy also. The American paymasters and grand high strategists of the would-be World War III are now beginning to become alarmed lest the poor British stooge should perish in their hands. *The Times* Washington correspondent writes (February 12, 1947):—

> The extent and gravity of the British fuel crisis have now become a major topic of American discussion, notably in the form of the question to what extent economic weakness may affect foreign policy. On some day not too distant the new Secretary of State, General Marshall, will appear before the Armed Forces Committees of the Senate and the House of Representatives to discuss —doubtless behind closed doors—the relation between this country's commit-

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ments and the steps that must be taken to ensure their implementation; it may confidently be assumed that he will consider and enlarge upon the relation of Britain to those commitments.

But here comes the rub in relation to these high-power secret ("behind closed doors") Anglo-American arms plans and strategic "commitments," so impregnated with the spirit of the United Nations:—

> Today's article by Mr. Walter Lippmann refers to the imperial commitments of Britain and to the effect upon them of a crisis which, if allowed to run its course, "could shake the world and make our position highly vulnerable and precariously isolated." The New York *Herald Tribune* considers a possible "revaluation" of British commitments as something to which the United States as well as Britain must "face up," since "our own foreign policy will inevitably be affected." Other Americans point out that the Labour Government seems to have been forced by the pressure of events into a contest for priority between foreign and domestic policies.

The sorrowful monkey grows anxious that pussy's paw is becoming too shrivelled to pull out any more chestnuts, and may even consider that good pussy should have a saucer of milk, if a ny can be spared

Coat and Cloth

Thirteen months ago in these Notes in February, 1946, we pointed out under the heading "Coat and Cloth" the inevitable dilemma that would finally face Mr. Bevin's foreign policy owing to the inability of the country to stand the strain on its man-power and resources:—

> There will be little basis left for squandering man-power in wholesale interventionist adventures, occupations, colonial suppression and minor wars, or a grandiloquent foreign policy to beat the big stick and play the gendarme in every quarter of the globe. The present artificial inflated figure of the armed forces, which is already strangling industrial recovery, cannot be maintained; and when the bubble is pricked, the bubble of a would-be Palmerstonian foreign policy will also have to be deflated. British foreign policy, so long used to laying down the law for every country in the world, will have to cut its coat according to its cloth, as a democratic nation co-operating with other democratic nations; and the sooner that time comes, the better for the prosperity and happiness of the British people, and for the peace and freedom of the rest of the world.

That time is drawing closer. But the Government, although already compelled to emphasise the desperate economic situation, in singular contrast to its blissful unawareness a year ago, is still unwilling to face the music and correct its policy. Mr. Bevin still clings to his post, his prestige gone, his "stake-my-reputation" policies in every region of the world a failure, his chest deflated and his table-thumping reduced to the feeblest tapping of an unquiet ghost at a spiritualist seance; but he is still unwilling to draw up the table of his bankruptcy and make room for a basic change of policy.

What Target?

What is the target of the Government for the armed forces? There is no final answer so far to that question; and yet it is obvious that the answer to that question is crucial for the whole problem of man-power. There is no absolute shortage of man-power; even the

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existing available man-power (after the loss of one and a half million women) is half a million above pre-war. There is only a shortage of man-power on the assumption of the maintenance of armed forces heavily above the pre-war level. The new White Paper on Defence has given the short-term target of 1,087,000 for March, 1948. It will be remembered that the White Paper on Defence a year ago gave the target of 1,100,000, with 100,000 training, for the end of 1946, and that in fact the figure at the end of 1946 was 1,427,000. Thus the new target is only a little less than the target originally fixed for the end of 1946, and would mean, even if carried out, only a reduction of 340,000 in fifteen months, during the period of most urgent needs of home production. The target of 1,087,000 for March, 1948, nearly three years after the end of the war, would be more than double the pre-war mid-1939 figure of 480,000. There is no attempt yet to fix a peacetime target. Where are the men to come from? We know that the projected eighteen months' conscription—already a heavy burden on production—will give 300,000 men, of whom 100,000 will be in training, leaving 200,000 for the army, navy and air force, home defence and overseas, apart from long-service regulars. How is the gap to be filled when those at present serving, whose demobilisation has been delayed, are finally demobilised?

Desperate Expedients

Is the plan to be for enlisting a large long-service professional army additional to the conscripts? The desperate complaints of the service chiefs have revealed that all the drum-beatings to boost up the numbers of recruits have failed to win the desired results, despite the lavish publicity for Montgomery's bed-lamps. Perhaps the attraction of the bed-lamps has been outweighed by the warning of the court-martials. It is even possible that recruits can only be won today for a democratic army and for a cause worth fighting for, and not like mercenaries to be drafted to the ends of the earth to suppress the freedom of other peoples, even with hypothetical bed-lamps. Lord Trenchard, the "realist" antithesis of Montgomery, has an answer ready: Use colonial power.

> Looking at the matter from the point of view of the army of the future, we were desperately short of man-power, but large numbers of men could be found in the colonies. Within two or three years we could get 1,000,000 men from the colonies.—(Lord Trenchard, House of Lords, January 29, 1947.)

The Roman Empire, troubled with man-power problems at its centre, also found a grand source of supply of legionaries from the peoples it had conquered. But that was the beginning of the end of the Roman Empire. The Imperial Chiefs of Staff have prepared a scheme for the emigration of a considerable proportion of the skilled man-power of Britain to the Dominions to disperse the risks and prepare for the increased vulnerability and possible loss of this island. The scheme, which is stated to have been presented with the approval of the Labour Cabinet to the Dominions Prime Ministers

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for consideration during 1946, has obvious attractions for Dominions industrialists. But it will hardly assist in solving the economic problems of Britain. However, there is always the plan to replace the man-power in Britain with Polish fascists and the importation of "displaced persons" of doubtful antecedents who have no wish to go back to their countries under a democratic regime. What will happen to the national traditions of Britain is a minor question which can hardly be expected to interest the cosmopolitan financial oligarchy whose hearts belong to Wall Street, and who see a grand future for Britain as the atom bomb base against a Socialist Europe and as the new "melting-pot," no longer for democratic refugees from tyranny, but for fascist refugees from democracy.

Fix the Target

Is it not time that the labour movement should face up to this question, and insist on the Government fixing a target for the armed forces compatible with United Nations obligations (meanwhile supporting the Soviet proposals for disarmament)—thus making possible the release of a million men? There is at present considerable confusion in discussion in labour circles. Thus two prominent statements appear in the same issue of *Forward* for February 1. The parliamentary correspondent declares on page 1:—

> Certain Labour back-benchers are now pressing the Government to reduce the Forces in favour of industry. But the situation is extremely delicate, and it is unlikely that the Government will be able to agree to any substantial reduction. I understand that Bevin is definitely against any such move at the present time.

The editorial declares on page 4:—

> The Government can review at once Britain's commitments abroad. At the end of the year we had 500,000 more men in the Services than we had estimated earlier. The White Paper says that 560,000 more workers are needed in the export trades. The moral is obvious.

R. H. S. Crossman writes in the *Sunday Pictorial* of February 2:—

> If we do not drastically reduce the Armed Forces, we cannot win the race against time or raise our exports to 175 per cent. of the 1938 level.
>
> Hard though it may be, the Cabinet has got to tell Field-Marshal Lord Montgomery that he must make do with far fewer men than he has at present.

But it is not a question of "telling the Service chiefs"—as if their greed for men were the only problem. It is a question of the Cabinet's own policy, which determines the strategic requirements. Marshal Montgomery would have a right to reply: "Certainly I can manage with less men, if you will require of me less commitments. Cease to demand of me that I maintain military domination over one quarter of the earth, from Greece and Egypt and the Sudan and Eritrea and Kenya to Palestine and Iraq and India and Ceylon and Burma and Malaya, in addition to the occupied territories and home defence and the arms plan commitments with the United States, and I will cease to demand an armed force much higher in proportion to population than that of the United States or the Soviet Union. But

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the decision on policy rests with you, gentlemen, and not with me." The Cabinet cannot hide behind the alibi of the Service chiefs. Nor can the labour movement hide behind either the Cabinet or the Service Chiefs; for its duty is to tell the Cabinet what it wants and to see that its wishes are carried out.

Bridging the Deficit

Similarly with the heavy deficit on the balance of payments and the export drive. It has been estimated that the interruption of production through the fuel crisis may bring down exports by £100 million, resulting in a heavier deficit in 1947 than in 1946, and the possible exhaustion of the American and Canadian loans by the winter of 1947-48. What is to be done? It is no use seeking desperately to find a one-sided solution by the sole device of forcing up exports, if the main source of the deficit is left untouched. It is no use exhorting even the most willing workers to redouble their efforts to fill a tank with water, on the grounds that water is an indisputable life necessity, if a great hole in the tank is all the time draining the water away. Two-thirds of the deficit is due to overseas government expenditure, mainly military. If this drain is dealt with, the remainder becomes more manageable. What does the demand to raise exports to 175 per cent. of 1938 mean in practice? It means that the 1946 exports (under specially favourable conditions) of £911 million must become £1,600 million. Since there can be no question of such an increase of food and raw material exports, it means that the increase must be in manufactured goods, representing an increase in that sphere of over 100 per cent. But the United States has officially announced its target for increased exports in 1947 at £2,750 million. All this projected increase in an impoverished world market. In the consequent desperate fight to force up exports what chance has the at present technically weaker British industry against the superior strength of American industry? The United States is pressing its economic offensive against Britain. The American Note for the abolition of imperial preference is still under Cabinet discussion. The American Note objecting to the Anglo-Argentine trade agreement, and enforced British retreat in the final reply, has shown that the full letter of the loan agreement is being used to force the maximum capitulations. The outlook on this basis is not promising. Is it not obvious that it is necessary to reconsider the whole present policy of international trading and economic relations, so as to develop the closest co-operation with the countries which are developing a stable basis of planned economies and progressive productive advance free from domination of the dollar dictators, with the Socialist Soviet Union, the democratic countries in Europe and the rising colonial countries, whose liberation should be hastened?

The Path of Recovery

Above all, it is necessary to concentrate resources on a serious planned policy of home reconstruction in a way that has not yet

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been attempted. Nationalisation in itself, under existing conditions, is no more than a legal device for facilitating reconstruction; it is not in itself reconstruction. The most alarming feature of the present situation is the slowness in tackling the real problems of technical re-equipment and modernisation, while frittering away the American loans on current consumption. Eighteen months have been in great part lost through following the line of least resistance, pursuing the temporary artificial boom of exports on the basis of the most easily available goods at the expense of home needs (trebled export of agricultural machinery alongside shortage for home agricultural needs and decline of agriculture at home), quick reconversion for easy production at home of electrical gadgets, etc., without consideration of consequences or planned priorities for basic needs, unchecked expansion of the betting "industry" to one of the largest industries, sacking women to restore "normal" conditions, current living on the American loans, and spendthrift foreign policy without regard to economic strategy. All this must be changed. A serious economic plan is essential, which places first the tasks of reconstruction and development of the basic industries, with the essential accompanying improvement in wages and conditions. The basis exists. Productive power in Britain increased 25per cent. through the war. The technical problems of reconstruction are far less heavy than those which the devastated countries of Europe are tackling with outstanding results in the countries under the new democratic regimes. But a new approach is essential on the basis of an overall economic plan, related to a foreign policy which recognises Britain's changed position in the world. The most important contribution of the Communist Party Congress due to be held in the latter part of the month will consist in outlining the essential features of such a plan and showing the path forward to Britain's recovery. And the Empire Conference of Communist Parties which will follow it will help to show the path forward, not only for the subject peoples of the Empire striving for freedom, but also to win the new position of Britain in the world, no longer as the tyrant and the bloodsucker of parasitic tribute, but as an equal nation among free and equal nations marching forward together for world co-operation and recovery.

R. P. D.

February 20, 1947.

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EUROPE TODAY (III)

by Leslie J. Solley, M.P.

MY colleague, R. H. S. Crossman, in his contribution to the discussion on "Europe Today" which appeared in the February issue of LABOUR MONTHLY, stated that he was entirely in agreement with Zilliacus' analysis of the problem. I also agree with the analysis of Zilliacus. Crossman, however, adds: "In my view the acid test of British policy is Anglo-French relations." With this view I do not agree. In my opinion, the acid test of our policy is our attitude to the Soviet Union. Dependent upon this attitude is our policy with respect to almost every other country, including France.

In the words of *The Times*' leader of February 1, 1947: "Great Britian needs, for reasons both of security and economic well-being, to maintain close relations with the Continent of Europe and most of all those parts of it nearest to her shores; *and to seek to maintain those relations in opposition to the Soviet Union and against the weight of Soviet influence, must prove in the long run a hazardous policy.*" To this I would add: it is not sufficient to be friends in Moscow; we must be friends in Trieste, in Warsaw, in Bucharest and in all the other centres of British and Soviet interest. Our friendship must extend to a working partnership. We must show by our deeds and by our whole attitude towards the U.S.S.R. that we are as anxious for a close alliance with the latter, and for making war as unthinkable between Britain and the Soviet Union, as is the case between us and the U.S.A.

In his report on March 10, 1939, to the eighteenth congress of the C.P.S.U. (B), Stalin stated that among the factors the Soviet Union relied upon in its foreign policy was the moral support of the working people of all countries, who were vitally concerned in the preservation of peace. Stalin, who is a realist, knows full well that he could not obtain such moral support if his policy did not satisfy the sound socialist common sense of the masses in other countries. Can we not borrow a leaf out of Stalin's book? Can we not shape our policy so as to demand and look for the moral support of the working people of other countries? Is this not one of the fundamental bases of a truly socialist foreign policy?

When by the objective consequences of our acts in Poland, Bulgaria and Rumania, whatever our subjective intentions might be, we give aid and succour to the political forces of reaction, we are negating this conception of the moral support of the working people, and thereby unnecessarily bringing ourselves into opposition with the Soviet Union.

Again, when Mr. Bevin compelled Premier Sofoulis to hold the Greek elections on March 31, 1946, knowing full well that no working-class party was participating in the election, and that the

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inevitable result would be the return of a government of the extreme right, the objective consequences of our policy was the oppression of the Greek working-class and not its moral support. But for lack of space I could give many other examples. Here is a final one: it is not surprising that the U.S.S.R. and Yugoslavia should be suspicious of our intentions with respect to Trieste when among A.M.G. appointees are to be found Quarantotti, Director of Teachers' Training Schools, who was General Inspector of Italian Schools in Germany up to 1943; Pisciotta, Chief Inspector of Civil Police, who was a leading member of the Italian political police in Trieste and notorious for brutality; Dr. Anassepoli, a magistrate, formerly liaison officer with Reiner, last German gauleiter of Trieste; and Professor Baraga, adviser to A.M.G. on the education of Slovenes, who was condemned to death by the Ljubljana Area Court for collaboration with the enemy and acts of brutality.

We must cease to condone or support such appointments. We must in all aspects of our foreign policy so act as to secure "the moral support of the working people of all countries." In that direction lies the implementation of a real and friendly working partnership with the U.S.S.R. and the building of a socialist world.

EUROPE TODAY (III)

by J. P. W. Mallalieu, M.P.

BRITISH imports from the United States in the first eleven months of 1946 were £202,500,000. British exports to the United States in the same period were £32,200,000. The gap of £170,300,000 came, for the most part, from the United States loan.

That loan will run out, at the latest, in 1949. Unless, before then, changes have been made in the direction of British trade, we shall be compelled to get another U.S. loan—it is most unlikely that we should be offered one on acceptable terms—or cut our imports sharply. A cut in imports would mean "Turkish cigarettes only," cinemas closed for twenty weeks in the year and lower food rations. No government could try that on and last a week.

What else can we try to do before the crisis hits us in one-and-a-half to two years' time? We can try to increase the production at home of some of the things which at present we import from the United States. But in agricultural products, at any rate, there are severe limits to this. We cannot, for example, grow either tobacco or cotton or anything like all the cereals we need.

We can try to expand our exports to the United States, at the expense of the home market. But there are limits to that. Quite apart from the serious danger that in two years' time the United States will be in a slump which will encourage her not to import but to export, we are today faced with the fact of United States tariff policy, which already shuts out much of our exports.

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Or we can find other markets in which to buy our raw materials, markets which are willing to accept our goods in payment. One step towards that end is the new scheme for clearing vast areas of African jungle in order to grow, first, ground nuts, then soya beans and linseed. We must not let it stop at that. We must also grow there American leaf tobacco and American staple cotton.

But starting from scratch in the jungle will not necessarily produce results by 1949. Tobacco plantations take years to grow, and in undeveloped areas labour is scarce.

That means that, besides developing as fully and rapidly as possible those untouched areas of Africa which we control, we must at once approach those more developed countries, notably the Balkans, where the climate is suitable both for American leaf tobacco and for American staple cotton, and where experienced labour is already available. With finance and machinery from us these countries, in a comparatively short time, could supply us with quantities of goods for which at the moment we are dependent on the United States.

There, then, is the brass tack consideration which must determine our foreign policy. We are buying huge quanties of goods from the United States. She will not, even now, allow us to pay for them in the only possible way—by goods; and will be even less willing to do so when her inevitable internal slump arrives. We must therefore switch our trade as quickly as possible to other countries whose internal revolutions are increasing their potential consumption and so diminishing the possibility of an internal slump; and by every means in our power we must help them to produce in their own countries or in the colonial territories they control those raw materials for which we and many other countries have so long been dependent upon the United States.

That means political agreement between Britain and those countries. The prize for political agreement will be a Socialist economic bloc comprising Russia, her satellites, most of Western Europe and the colonial territories they control; and that will mean both the preservation of peace and a steadily rising standard of living for the countries concerned.

We regret that owing to the stoppage of power for industry, this issue is unavoidably late.

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THE FIGHT FOR FREEDOM

by Ivor Montagu

THE general problem of the rehabilitation of Europe is not a matter of only material reconstruction. It is not just a question of getting industry and agriculture going again. Man himself has to be made over. Twelve million people have not been done to death like cattle without leaving a scar on the conduct and the conscience of the survivors. Racial superstitions, contempt for law, irresponsibility or indifference to cruelty, robbery and corruption have not vanished so easily.

There are large areas in Europe where no thorough bourgeois revolution has ever taken place, where an arbitrary feudalism has simply blended into a system of feudalism bolstered by subsidy from foreign capitalists and justified by fictive election procedure, and where democratic controls have never been developed on either local or national scale. Even where new social and production relationships are being developed, habit, deeply ingrained by the culture arisen from the old, persists to handicap the new. To ignore this fact, to assume that "man" and "elections" are or should be or even could be identical in Paddington and Pest, leads straight to illusion.

Every reactionary camouflages himself as a Progressive nowadays, following Hitler's play with the label of National *Socialism*. Most folk realise that the Liberal Democrats in Italy are really Conservatives, and that the Japanese Constitutionalists are those most zealous in preserving the Emperor's absolutism in cold storage. But few appreciate to what degree a label, once, maybe, no misnomer, may rapidly come to misdescribe the package. Fascists, their own party outlawed, find an alternative means of expression. Thus the Catholic Party vote in Belgium totalled its own pre-war figure plus the former figure of the Rexists. The "Smallholders" Party in Hungary mustered a majority even in the towns; its voters cannot all have allotments. Mikolajcyk's Peasant Party before the war opposed the dictatorship of generals and colonels, which gentry now see in him their sole hope. Whoever its leading personalities, whatever its ostensible principles and programmes, it cannot help representing those of whom it has become the chosen medium.

What has happened to all the fascists in Germany? Not, one means in this question, those eligible for denazification—whether in jug, in hiding, or perfunctorily scrubbed and winked at in the Western zones. But what has happened to those many-millioned masses who swallowed, digested, distended their minds and bellies on Hitler's ideas, who today hustle glibly to label themselves "democrats" or whatever else they think will curry favour with the occupying power, but who to this day have not the slightest sense of responsibility for Germany's misdeeds, nor even any appreciation that

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Germany did anything wrong, merely feel ill-used, and that the world must come to their rescue?

Optimists may cherish the illusion that because Berlin's voters landslid to a ticket labelled "Social Democratic Party" they were voting for something corresponding to the election programme of the British Labour Party as interpreted by Transport House. Those who read, or heard, their campaign propaganda with its uproariously welcomed chauvinistic incitement (especially against the Russians, but against all the Allies), its orgy of self-exculpation and self-pity, have no such comfortable and roseate opinions of the significance of that victory.

The struggle to transform the deformed in Europe has to take place not only in each population, but within the Democratic Blocs, even within the Communist Parties themselves, of all the countries.

II

The true democrat must search beneath the names for the real processes and tendencies in operation, define the infections that must be cured in the process of development towards a democratic way of life—in the field of public order, corruption, dishonesty, partiality of the courts, racial discrimination: in the field of government, irresponsibility, lack of participation in shaping policy and administration: in the field of reconstruction, wait-and-see-ism, expectation of salvation from some exterior source: in the field of foreign relations, speculationon a new war,andabove all a war against the Soviet Union.

Thus denazification, the pursuit and punishment of fascist criminals and quislings, is an essential act in the discrediting of past ideologies and the growth of a sense of responsibility and law. Control of foreign trade, planning of economy, are measures necessary to cope with the enormity of the tasks of reconstruction facing the majority of these countries. Land reform, measures for adjusting uneven consumption such as variant systems of goods distribution with privileged access (the Co-operatives in Hungary, the Economat system in Rumania) are essential not merely for direct economic reasons but as instalments of social justice without which the sacrifices entailed in reconstruction could not be obtained voluntarily.

There is a clear parallel here between many of the measures undertaken in the new democracies under stresses only less severe than war, and the controls, rationing, taxation which, without any abandonment of capitalist conviction, the administrations of Britain and U.S.A. were obliged to introduce for war purposes. There is a parallel even in the political measures made necessary in Britain (where the security-survival problem was much more acute than in distant America) of coalition government, censorship, government propaganda, 18B, etc. The struggle is in actual fact not one between Bolshevism and anti-Bolshevism, between "East" and "West" as the cant phrase has it, but a struggle for survival, growth and eventual victory of general humanistic values and manners.

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III

Let us be quite clear. The measures necessary for general democratic advance and to eradicate fascism do in general advance Socialism. This is the class-root of the Anglo-American diplomat-military hierarchy-big business cum press peerage and millionairage opposition to them. I have heard it quite seriously argued by apologists for MilGov in Germany that the provisions of the Potsdam Agreement eliminating fascists from politics, administration and business, and the provisions for breaking the power of the great armaments firms and industrial trusts, were a deep-laid plot of the Bolshevists, put over on the soft and unsuspecting Anglo-Saxons, to "proletarianise" or "Communise" Germany—since, strictly applied, these provisions would remove all the brains of the German bourgeoisie and the principal barriers to Bolshevism. The fact that not applying them would preserve, installed and undiscredited, the influences that launched aggression on the world, could scarcely be expected to count as a menace to the types who welcomed Munich as an instrument of peace.

The point here is: in the overwhelming majority of cases the reforms and measures proposed from the Left are similarly unchallengeable on rational grounds and commend themselves widely outside the ranks of those professing them (which is why, for example, the Hungarian Communists enjoy an authority, an economic leadership, far beyond their numbers, and why, in such countries as Italy, Hungary, Rumania, Czechoslovakia, there are no current programmatic differences between the Communist Parties and the Social Democratic Parties). These measures and programmes infallibly commend themselves not only within, but without the countries to democratic people.

To discredit these programmes and measures the Anglo-American agents distract attention from their content and concentrate it on relative irrelevancies. A favourite tactic for this purpose is the exploitation of elections.

IV

Elections are part of the apparatus of democracy, and not democracy itself. This truism would be hardly worth repeating were it not for such ludicrous distortions as the elections held in the American-occupied zone of Germany before one single party had been allowed a newspaper and with, in some areas, the Communist Party legalised only a few hours before the polling.

To estimate the moral and political regeneration of Germany, it is necessary to examine what policies, what personalities, with what records, what ideas are gaining a following, not the physical circumstances in which, under guidance of MilGov, crosses are made on papers. Similarly, before throwing our hats into the air at the fact that Austria has had an election, it is worth asking oneself what is the attitude of the majority party to the guilt showed by so

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many Austrians, and whether it would not, at the veriest opportunity, have recourse delightedly to a new Heimwehr to maintain in the Government a predominance it has already lost in the electorate. Conversely, the promise for Europe and the world implicit in the new democracies depends on the policies they are developing and the degree to which their peoples are becoming associated with them, not on the degree to which their elections formally resemble those of England and Wales.

Conditions are different and so electoral procedures must be different. Not because there is an "Eastern" and a "Western" democracy, but precisely because in essence there is only one. But we have no party in league with bandits in the woods, no churches where pictures of "Ritual Murders" are displayed, no archbishop ready to excuse pogroms in public pronouncements, no emigre ex-tyrants plotting sabotage and murder. Who can say that, faced with such conditions, we should grant in England such license as the miscreants receive in Poland? Certainly, we did not at times in our history when at all comparable conditions existed.

V

Nowhere is this contrast between the reality and the name, the content and the form, more marked than in Rumania. In Rumania the opposition has degenerated to the character of gangs of hooligans seeking to provoke repressions in order to give opportunity to the British and American political representatives to complain on their behalf. What is remarkable is not that they have some meetings prevented or broken up, but that they carry through others with impunity. Neither opposition party, nor the fragment of the dissident Social Democrat stooge Petrescu, puts forward a constructive policy even remotely offering an alternative to that of the Government. The opposition fought the election on the following five-point programme:—

(1) Two bad harvests. God sent the drought; that proves He disapproves of the Government.

(2) The earthquake. Proves likewise.

(3) The Government is not really Rumanian at all, but consists of hidden Hungarians and Jews. Proof? The fact that it has forbidden the ancient Rumanian sport of persecuting Hungarians and Jews.

(4) The Government really means to collectivise the land, for it is the puppet of the Russians who have given it these orders. Proof: the agrarian reform itself. It will be easier to take away and collectivise land that belongs to poor people than to rich people.

(5) The moment the Government is changed the floodgates of American prosperity will be opened. American food and American capital will stream into Rumania in unconditional and unending flow.*

* Parts of Rumania are near starvation following the bad harvests. The U.S.S.R. has sent grain—not much, but some. There have been American offers of food, but on these conditions: (*a*) cutting down of reparations to U.S.S.R.; (*b*) support for the U.S. thesis on the Danube; (*c*) acceptance of the British thesis on the oil properties.

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If it were really known and appreciated in Britain and U.S.A. what these scoundrels were like, the public in each country would be horrified at the diplomatic support for them. As it is, British and U.S. diplomats sorrowfully wag their heads as they forecast that the Government's effort to check anti-minority chauvinism will fail, and demand a free rein for those busy seizing every chance they get to fan the flames of race and national hatred.

Consider Rumania's past, present and future. The past, its stamp upon the people. Rumania has never had a revolution. It has not even had a transformation of administrative personnel. It has neither a great puritan mass liberation core, purged by its ordeals, as in Yugoslavia, nor a skeleton of proud fighters against odds, as in Bulgaria. It did not even change war-partners as result of popular pressure, as in Italy, but by a palace stroke of the pen.

To demand, in these circumstances, wholesale honesty and "correctness" *before* the social revolution is indeed to put the cart before the horse. To discover irregularities is simplicity itself. To ascertain, in respect to any given irregularity, whether it is indeed done deliberately by the Government as an act of repression, or just done by the functionary who thought it the right thing to do, or done by an agent of the opposition in order to draw attention to its wickedness, would tax the capacities of a whole corps of Sherlock Holmeses. Surely the important thing, the relevant thing, is where Rumania is moving, to help those who are helping, discountenance those who are trying to set her in reverse. All else is irrelevant.

VI

British and American policy in Europe is ostensibly founded upon the encouragement of "Social Democracy," the thwarting of "totalitarian Communism." Translated into practice, this brand of "democracy" means authority for the bearers of fascist ideology where they are in a majority, opportunity for them to sabotage where they are not; and opposition to "totalitarianism" means attempts to break up every anti-fascist bloc and particularly, whether by advice or, as in the part of Germany occupied by the Western Allies, by legal sanction, to split the working-class and prevent collaboration between Socialists and Communists.

Today every politician of the old regime is looking to British and American military intervention against Russia, and the atom bomb, to restore him to power. Simple people in the villages look askance at neighbours who join the Communist Party, for, as it said in Hungary: "When the British and Americans come every Communist will be hanged." Anti-semites laugh, for they see plenty of evidence that their ideas do not lack sympathy from Allied high-ups. Fascists look and flee West for protection. Every black-marketeer in the Balkans is ready at sight to clap a British uniform on the back and greet it as a friend and brother in the name of free enterprise. It cannot be denied that the Anglo-American policy with

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these effects has had, and so far as it continued will have, a certain success in delaying the transformation of the deformed.

This is not the way to root out fascist remnants. But it is a reflection of the policy conflicts at high level of the Big Three. The expansion of the area of agreement between the Big Three, the consequent narrowing and frustration of the hopes of the war speculators, will correspondingly increase the role played by political experience in influencing the minds of the peoples of the freed countries. European democracy will grow, will advance—*e pur si muove*—but this is the only soil in which it will grow peacefully.

THE VIRTUOUS SPIRAL

by Elinor Burns

A NEW outcry on the dangers of inflation, new warnings against the results of higher wages, quickly followed the appearance in January of the White Paper on Britain's economic position. The statement itself gave grounds for this because, while it set out a case for increased production, it failed to show the positive effect of higher wages and lower prices in the drive for greater output. On the contrary, the Government gives "no guarantee . . . that some rise of prices may not be necessary."

For the people of this country the question of prices and supplies of consumer goods is more and more becoming the practical test of whether or not the higher standard of living they look for under a Labour Government is to be realised. Exhortations to save and "make sure your ship comes home" (to an unknown port at an unknown date) cannot be a permanent source of confidence, particularly at a time when actual ships come home with cargoes of costly fruit and wine that only the few can afford to buy. More of the things almost every family needs, at prices they can pay, must quickly be made available to end the shortage that means hardship in so many homes.

Official index figures provide only an obscure reflection of what has happened to prices of consumer goods and services since before the war. The cost-of-living index is notoriously out of date and inaccurate, but even this shows that clothing is 67 per cent. above pre-war. Wholesale prices of manufactured goods in November, 1946, were almost 61 per cent. higher than 1939 prices. At the same date the percentage increase in weekly *wage rates* (leaving out of account changes in *earnings*) was 65. But a more important indication of current tendencies is the fact that between the autumn of 1945 and the autumn of 1946, wholesale prices of manufactures went up by 11.5 per cent. and wage rates by only 8 per cent.

What are the chief factors influencing price changes in the present situation? What has to be done to ensure that the relation

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between prices and wages corresponds with the general aims of full employment and a higher standard of living, which a Labour majority was elected to carry out?

In capitalist economy prices tend to rise above value (measured by the amount of labour embodied in the product) in conditions of short supply, and to fall below value in periods of over-production. At the same time, of course, the value of a particular commodity may change, for example, through the introduction of labour-saving machinery.

In the conditions of "normal" capitalism (between wars), the causes of short supply, leading to a rise in the price of goods above their value, can be reduced to a single origin: deliberate restriction of output by the capitalist owners of industry. Restriction may take many forms, varying from failure to develop resources, as in British agriculture, to the destruction of goods already produced—burning wheat and throwing coffee into the sea.

But the necessity to change the character of production to meet war needs, and the destruction caused by the war itself, have led to world-wide shortage, revealed not only in scarcity of consumption goods but in shortage of raw materials and plant. In this situation important new factors come into action.

The tendency of prices to rise above value, as a result of scarcity, is partly held in check by government control of prices, by subsidies that keep down the purchase price of certain foodstuffs, and by the policy of cheap money.

Today, disregarding the misleadingly low cost-of-living index, and taking wholesale figures, prices are 61 per cent. above 1939. In March, 1920, sixteen months after the end of the 1914-18 war, wholesale prices were 225 *per cent.* above the pre-war figure. This is one side of the picture.

But the immediate question in regard to the cost of living is this: are the existing measures of control strong enough to check further increases, to hold back the pressure of prices to outrun wages, and block the advance towards increased output and higher standards? If not, what new measures are needed to forestall the danger of inflation?

To answer this it is necessary to look at the other side of the picture—to see what influences, at the present stage, are pushing prices up.

In the main they are of three kinds: increasing profits, increasing costs, and indirect taxation. The year 1946 has shown a considerable rise in the general level of profits. For joint-stock companies the average was 5 per cent. above 1945. For particular groups the increase was much more than this. In the cotton industry, for example, according to the *Economist*, profits in 1946 were higher than in any year since 1920—the final stage of the cottom boom that followed the 1914-18 war. In 1945 the total amount of rent, interest and profit was

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very nearly double the pre-war amount, and represented a *higher proportion* of industrial output.

Greater profits in the pockets of the rich not only foster black market dealings in consumption goods, but tend to break through the controls on prices of capital goods, and raise costs of production.

Indirect taxation is a substantial counterweight against the "cost of living" subsidies. It enters directly into the price that people have to pay for drinks and tobacco, for tea and sugar, for transport and entertainment, and for the various consumption goods that are still subject to purchase-tax. And, as with other additions to "costs," only the most rigorous control can prevent something more than the actual amount paid in tax from being added to the price.

But while the drive for greater profits is the constant motive, it is not, as a rule, the avowed reason for higher prices. At the present time every employer in manufacturing industry, and a good many in the distributive trades, will put forward the argument that costs have gone up: costs of plant and materials, of fuel and transport, and, above all, wages costs. So prices must go up once more.

It is true, of course, that the expenses entering into the cost of consumption goods have risen. But the same factors which are pushing up the price of these commodities are also at work, to a large degree, in relation to capital goods and raw materials.

In this present stage, therefore, the upward movement of prices of manufactures is outstripping the advance in wages. In other words, the movement to depress real wages has begun. The first step in the disastrous sequence of falling consumption, over-production and unemployment has been taken at a time when, for the prosperity of the people of Britain, everything depends on increasing production.

To check the rise in prices of consumption goods, and at the same time to carry forward the fight for higher wages, is now an indispensable part of the drive for increased production. It is indispensable in the long-term view, as well as in its immediate effect in stimulating higher output. A steadily rising flow of household goods and equipment, furniture, clothing and food, of good quality at prices the worker can pay, is an obvious part of any plan for raising the level of production, particularly in the development areas.

To what extent has the Labour Government taken measures to secure this? If, as the facts show, prices are advancing more than wages, what else is necessary?

During the war a system of price control was established. It developed from the first attempts, under the Prices of Goods Act, to fix prices on the basis of 1939 figures plus increased costs, to the detailed setting of margins at each stage of manufacture and distribution, and the fixing of maximum prices. These were combined with

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Government standardisation of products (utility goods) large amount of direct Government purchase.

Except the last, these methods of price control are applied. The result can be seen in the difference, already rel between the rise in prices after the 1914-18 war, and the pos today. But the important point is that these controls have not bee strong enough to prevent a continuing upward movement of prices in 1946.

The principal argument that is used against a policy of lower prices and higher wages is that there is already a gap of £1,000 million between available consumption goods and potential purchasing power. If wages go up, according to this line of argument, and there is "more money about," then prices of the limited volume of goods available are bound to go up too.

But this need not happen, if more effective price control is enforced, and at the same time more goods become available for the home market. Higher wages can mean an expanding market, increased output and lower costs of production.

Existing price controls, through the fixing of profit margins from manufacturer to retailer, have developed out of war conditions, and were based on the costs, not of the most efficient manufacturing and distributing concerns, but of all who had to be brought in to meet war needs. It is now claimed by distributors that wholesale prices have gone up more than retail prices, and that as a result margins on which retailers have to carry on their business (the difference between wholesale and retail prices) are too low.

This claim is not supported by the dividend results of some of the big stores: Harrods 10 per cent. plus 4 per cent. bonus, Marks & Spencer 50 per cent., Woolworth's 70 per cent. On an increasing turnover, very high profits are being made out of distribution. In order to protect real wages, the labour movement has a strong interest in pressing for reduced margins and backing up the demand of the T.U.C. for full information on profits.

But one large section of the labour movement, the Co-operatives, are themselves engaged in wholesale and retail trade. Where do they stand on the question of price policy? To what extent does the Labour Government see the Co-operative movement as an important means of influencing prices and providing large-scale distribution on the basis, not of profit, but of service to the consumer?

Within the co-operative movement itself there are two tendencies; one of them accepting the view that if wages go up, prices must follow, in order to maintain dividends and provide for expansion; the other seeing that a rising standard of wages and condition, in distribution as well as in other industries, is possible on the basis of greater efficiency, better equipment, and a larger turnover per worker employed, and recognising that lower prices and higher wages for

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he British working-class will bring a further great expansion in the volume of Co-operative trade.

In reducing the costs of distribution, and ensuring that manpower is not drawn away unnecessarily from productive industry, the Co-operatives, under a Labour Government, are in a position to set new standards. They can do this, if their trading policy is now directed towards large-scale planned buying, thereby reducing factory costs and making it possible for them to sell in many cases *below ceiling prices;* towards securing a bigger proportion of trade, by more efficient methods, even where the total volume is still limited; and towards seizing more boldly opportunities for Co-operative investment in Co-operative enterprise, instead of clinging to the old policy of investment in government securities for fear of a run on Co-operative share capital.

But in spite of the new agreement between the Labour Party and the Co-operative movement, the Labour Government has given few signs of recognising that the Co-operatives can take an important part in carrying out Labour's economic programme. Instead of giving direct assistance to Co-operative societies in regard to supplies, equipment and licences, the attitude of Government departments is so rigidly against "preferential treatment" that Co-operatives often come off worse than private traders. A vigorous demand from all sections of the labour movement is needed to change this false impartiality.

The second point in the argument against lower prices and higher wages is that even if prices are kept down it will not really make much difference in what the workers in this country can buy, because Britain must manufacture for export.

It is certainly beyond question that a proportion of British products must be exported, because there are some essential foodstuffs and raw materials (and, at the present time, certain types of machinery) that cannot be produced here. These must be imported, and paid for by exports.

Government propaganda is aimed at getting more and more production for export. But where are our exports going, and what is Britain getting in exchange—what values in the imports we receive, and what new basis for trading relations with countries that are planning their economic future?

In the main, British exports are being used partly to buy high-priced food and raw materials from dollar countries, and partly to provide for British armed forces abroad. It is true, therefore, that a bigger volume of goods for the home market—more British manufactures of clothes, furniture, household goods and equipment for British homes—means a change in foreign policy. And it is certain that British workers would be more interested in raising their output, if they knew that they were turning out goods for South Wales or Lancashire or the democratic countries of Europe, instead of paying

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dearly for goods from America, or providing for fashion parades in South Africa.

A changed foreign policy; a production drive that inspires the workers because they feel the benefits of it; a more determined control of prices and supplies—these are the ways to lay the bogy of the "vicious spiral" and bring to life a "virtuous spiral" of higher wages leading to more production and lower prices.

THE COLONIAL EMPIRE TODAY

by M. Carritt

EIGHTEEN months have passed since, with the final military victory in Europe, Labour was voted into power in Britain. It is reasonable to review the situation now and ask what sort of picture emerges of Labour's Colonial policy.

It has to be admitted that, with honourable exceptions, the labour movement has tended in the past to neglect colonial issues and, though giving verbal support to the colonial liberation movements, in practice to hold back when it came to throwing in its great strength behind the day-to-day colonial struggle for freedom and democracy and against victimisation, discrimination and repression. Nevertheless the movement is generally conscious that the exploitation of a vast Empire brings no benefit to the British working-class, but only strengthens the hold of reactionary monopolies over British society.

For this reason, and because the country's colonial policy is inseparably bound up with its foreign policy, the question of what Labour in power intends to do about the colonies is not a question of doctrinaire socialism. How far is the Labour Government prepared to go in giving effect to an international policy for world peace, the central theme of which must be the ending of national exploitation and the right of all nations to self-determination? How far is the Labour Government prepared to go in making that complete break with imperialism which alone will enable subject countries to develop their own economies, to raise their standards of living, and to contribute to the expansion of world trade which is necessary if the productive capacity of the world is to be employed?

Labour's victory made a deep impression upon the colonial people. The decisive defeat of the Tory Imperialists inevitably aroused hopes of a new approach towards their own struggle for liberation. The war itself, and their war-time experiences, had had a profound effect upon the Colonies. Enemy occupation and material destruction on a vast scale in Burma and Malaya; sky-high inflation and acute food shortages in Africa, West Indies and the Middle East; fantastic profiteering and unchecked black market without adequate rationing or price control; the personal skills and confidence acquired

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in Army and Air Force; the declarations of the right of self-determination subscribed to by the leaders of the United Nations; the world strength and acknowledged liberating mission of the Soviet Union and the emergence of democratic popular governments in Europe in place of reactionary cliques subservient to one or other imperialist power; all these were factors contributing to a remarkable political upsurge in all colonial countries

Post-war imperialism was therefore faced with the most acute problem. The old order was discredited and showed signs of its inherent weakness vis-a-vis the new forces of colonial national liberation Already the Tories, before their election defeat, had given an indication that they intended to meet this new situation, partly by the unrestrained use of military force in order to restore the old *status quo* of privilege in the colonies, but partly also by constitutional reform and amendments which would make concessions to a small upper stratum of colonial society whilst retaining the reins of power in the hands of the colonial administration.

The experience of eighteen months of Labour Government has brought a measure of disillusionment to the colonial people, whose leaders and national press are now declaring that there is no difference between Tory and Labour so far as the Empire is concerned.

Nor is it lost to them that the Tories have expressed frank satisfaction at the continuity of policy in the field of colonial administration—a continuity of policy which Mr. Herbert Morrison reaffirmed before his American audience of business men when he publicly denied that Labour had any quarrel with the "jolly old Empire."

What then is the basis in fact for this disillusion? Leaving aside India, whose bitter disillusion with the farcical freedom of the Cabinet Mission's Plan has been analysed in previous numbers of LABOUR MONTHLY; leaving aside also Burma, whose government representatives have been in London for talks the outcome of which gives the lie to Churchill's fear that the Empire was being "scuttled" and fully justifies the fears of the left wing of the Burmese national movement that the talks were simply a trap to force the government leaders into a compromise without basically altering the unpopular White Paper on Burma published by a Tory Colonial Secretary. Apart from these issues, let us confine ourselves only to those territories directly under the Colonial Office or, as in the Middle East, under the protecting wing of the Foreign Office.

From the numerous examples which might be taken, the following will suffice to show the limitations of Labour's colonial policy and to explain the colonial people's feeling of disillusion.

In the international sphere it has been the British Government's role to oppose every effort made to make a reality of the Trusteeship proposals of U.N.O, to argue that independence should not be the objective of Trusteeship, to support South Africa's claim to incor-

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porate the South West African territory and to produce draft "Trusteeship Agreements" which in effect make the Trusteeship territories permanent and integral parts of the Empire.

In the Middle East the Government announced many months ago its intention to withdraw troops from Egypt and to negotiate a new Treaty on the basis of absolute equality. The Tories in Parliament made a half-hearted attempt to present this as a declaration of "scuttle" and many Labour enthusiasts genuinely believed that the oil and imperialist policies of the Middle East were being abandoned. But what are the facts?

Negotiations for the new Treaty have been in a state of permanent breakdown owing to disputes over the delayed time-table for withdrawal of troops and over the demand for a military alliance which would turn Egypt into a pawn of Britain's foreign policy. At the same time, new barracks are being built at Suez, and Palestine is scheduled to become a permanent strategic base—thus discounting all previous pledges for that country's evolution towards independence.

In the Middle East also our faithful and subservient ally, Abdulla of Transjordan, whose territory might otherwise have come under the Trusteeship Council, has been given "independence" in return for Britain's right to maintain and control all armed forces in Transjordan and to keep permanent political advisors there. A similar "independence" is promised to Libya, with similar reservations and with similar motives.

So far from dismantling the Empire in the Middle East, British imperialism, with its oil agreements and its intrigues for Middle Eastern blocs and Greater Syria plans, is attempting to consolidate its position and is greatly increasing its military garrisons.

It is, however, popularly argued by those who hopefully see in the Government's colonial policy a gradual liquidation of the Empire, that the Colonial Office, in territories directly under its control, is setting out to tackle the problems of economic rehabilitation before tackling the issue of political freedom. It is, of course, absurd to make this distinction; economic reconstruction and industrial development can only take place in so far as political democracy is extended in order to release the forces required for reconstruction and to take the place of the foreign vested interests which always have prevented, and necessarily must prevent, native industrial development. Apart from that, such plans for development as have yet been made public are not impressive. The extension of the Colonial Welfare Development Fund is a drop of charity in an ocean of poverty. In any case, such help as is required for developing the colonial countries must not be an excuse to continue the imperialist relationship which is incompatible with development, but must be given as between equals and without discrimination

In Tanganyika the Government has a much-advertised scheme for the opening-up of a ground-nuts industry which, it is claimed,

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will rectify the unbalanced agricultural economy of that territory. But the benefits which might accrue from such development are nullified by the decision to entrust the development of this new industry to the United African Company, the African's most powerful exploiter.

In the West Indies some limited industrial development took place during the war in order to enable these islands to meet some of their immediate requirements, which the lack of shipping had cut off. The official Economic Committee in Jamaica recently issued a report in which any further industrial development was pooh-poohed and the prospect of a higher standard of living or of modern social services was ruled out. Recent information published by the People's National Party in Jamaica indicates that even the limited wartime industrial developments have now been reversed at the instance of powerful importing combines, and the typical colonial economy of Jamaica is to be retained.

In the field of constitutional reform in the African colonies the Government has made no bones about accepting and carrying out Tory policy. Reforms prepared by a Tory Colonial Secretary in Nigeria and Gold Coast have been inaugurated with Tory blessing. The sum total and effect of these "democratic advances" is to create a majority of Africans on the Legislative Councils without, however, limiting the Governor's powers. At the same time the principles of democratic election are sacrificed in favour of methods of indirect representation through Chiefs' Councils and bodies representing vested interests.

In Kenya a seat on the Legislative Council has been given to the hitherto unrepresented Africans. How far this half-hearted innovation is from constituting a revolutionary break with imperialist practice in the white man's East African paradise will be gathered when it is realised that the representative is to be nominated by the Governor.

Throughout Africa the objectional Pass Laws remain unchanged; Africans are still herded into Reserves, and Mr. Creech Jones has gone back upon Labour's pronounced policy by giving support to the European claim for increased White Settlement. Africa still remains a continent in which the African enjoys no civil liberty, virtually no voice even in local self-government, and is discriminated against politically, legally, and economically at every turn.

Turn from Africa to Malaya in South East Asia. Here the popular democratic movement reached a high level of anti-imperialist militancy during its three and a half years of guerilla warfare against the Japanese. From the very day of re-occupation by British troops the whole of our armed force was used *against* the people who fought for us against the Japanese in order to restore the old *status quo* of colonialism. Under cover of armed forces the old vested interests

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and the old compromised administrators were brought back. The popular movement was persecuted and hundreds of the guerilla fighters have been arrested on charges of "murdering" Japanese agents and policemen (in two cases the charge was "altered" to stealing the machinery of a river dredger!). Civil liberty is non-existent. Demonstrations are fired upon. Editors are arrested and newspapers suppressed.

However, since the situation cannot entirely be dealt with by repressive measures, new constitutional proposals have now been published which, as in the case of Africa, leave all executive authority with the Governor and provide him with a puppet legislative council in the formation of which democratic elections play no part. In spite of a promise to consult the Malayans before publishing these constitutional reforms the fact is that no such consultation took place with any of the popular democratic organisations, but only with the Sultans and their reactionary organisation, the U.M.N.O.

There is little room for satisfaction here; on the contrary, like the Government's foreign policy with which it is closely linked, it is a policy full of peril for the British people. A golden opportunity presented itself in 1945 for Labour to ally itself closely with the mighty upsurge of colonial democracy. It would have been possible to draw close the bonds of friendship and international co-operation with millions of dispossessed and exploited colonial people for a decisive and final defeat of reaction throughout the world. But to do so required an alliance based upon the unequivocal rejection of imperialism. It is not too late now: let the Tories bleat about "scuttle"; for the British people it is of the utmost importance that the powerful movements of colonial liberation should be working as equals side by side with us for world peace and prosperity.

Document of the Month

TWO DRAFTS FOR INDIAN INDEPENDENCE

The following is the text of Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru's resolution on "An Independent Sovereign Republic," which was passed by the Indian Constituent Assembly on January 22:—

"This Constituent Assembly declares its firm resolve to proclaim India an independent sovereign republic, and to draw up for her future governance a constitution wherein the territories that now comprise British India, the territories that now form the Indian States, and such other parts of India as are outside British India and the States, as well as such other territories as are willing to be constituted into the independent sovereign India, shall be a Union of them.

"And wherein the said territories, whether with their present boundaries or with such others as may be determined by the Constituent Assembly and thereafter, according to the law of the constitution, shall possess and retain the status of autonomous units, together with residuary powers, and exercise all powers and functions of government and administration, save and except such powers as are vested in or assigned to the Union, or as are

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inherent or implied in the Union or resulting therefrom.

"And wherein all power and authority of the sovereign independent India, its constituent parts and organs of government are derived from the people.

"And wherein shall be guaranteed and secured to all the people of India justice, social, economic and political; equality of status, of opportunity and before the law; freedom of thought, expression, belief, faith, worship, vocation, association and action, subject to law and public morality.

"And wherein adequate safeguards shall be provided for minorities, backward and tribal areas and depressed and other backward classes.

"And wherein shall be maintained the integrity of the territory of the republic and its sovereign rights of land, sea and air, according to justice and the law of civilised nations, and this ancient land attain its rightful and honoured place in the world and make its full contribution to the promotion of world peace and the welfare of mankind."

The following amendment, drawn up by the Central Committee of the Communist Party of India, was submitted by Somnath Lahiri, Communist representative. The Speaker declined to accept it.

1. This Constituent Assembly, expressing the will of the Indian people to be free and independent from the yoke of Imperialism, hereby solemnly declares India to be an independent country. It declares that, whether in British India or in the States, it is the people who are sovereign and all authority shall henceforth be derived from them.

Provisional Government

2. This Constituent Assembly calls upon the Indian members of the Interim Government, who, as the nominees of the two main popular parties and of the minorities, together enjoy the support of the overwhelming majority of our people, to act as the Provisional Government of India and to function henceforth in the name of the Indian people and not as hitherto in the name of the British King-Emperor.

All powers so far exercised by the British Government, the King-Emperor, the Viceroy and the Governors over the Indian Provinces as well as the powers of paramountcy exercised by the Viceroy over the Indian States are herewith ended.

Freedom and Independence

3. Asserting the freedom and independence of the country, the Provisional Government shall at once proceed to fulfil the following tasks:—

(i) Take immediate steps to effect the withdrawal of all British troops, as their retention on Indian soil is incompatible with Indian sovereignty, and to secure the withdrawal of Indian troops outside India as their remaining in other lands is inconsistent with India's policy of peace and freedom for all nations.

(ii) Take over all banks, industrial and transport concerns, plantations, mines, etc., owned by British capital and nationalise them.

(iii) Take steps to secure international recognition for the free Provisional Government and to enter into diplomatic relations with other countries on the basis of equality.

(iv) Negotiate a treaty with Britain on the basis of the recognition of Indian independence, equality and mutual co-operation.

Programme of Provisional Government

4. This Constituent Assembly calls upon the Provisional Government to carry through the following programme for the realisation of independence, thus creating conditions for the framing of a democratic constitution:—

(i) Conversion and expansion of the present Indian Army, Navy and Air Force into a real National Army, commanded, officered and manned by Indians, owing allegiance to the people and to the cause of Indian independence.

(ii) Full restoration and extension of civil liberties. No police or military interference against workers' strikes for better wages and living conditions, no suppression of peasant actions against landlords and hoarders. Full support to all mass demonstrations against imperialist rule; full support

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to the struggle of the peoples of the States for democracy and freedom.

(iii) Adoption of urgent interim measures to afford relief to the toiling masses:—

(*a*) Immediate handing over of all fallow land of the Government and the landlords to the landless peasants, reduction of rents and moratorium on debts, prohibition of all evictions and levy of a steeply-graded agricultural income-tax pending abolition of landlordism.

(*b*) Immediate enactment of legislation enforcing a minimum living wage, the recognition of trade unions, and the penalisation of defaulting capitalists.

(*c*) Import of capital goods for a planned expansion and reconversion of industries to supply the urgent needs of the people.

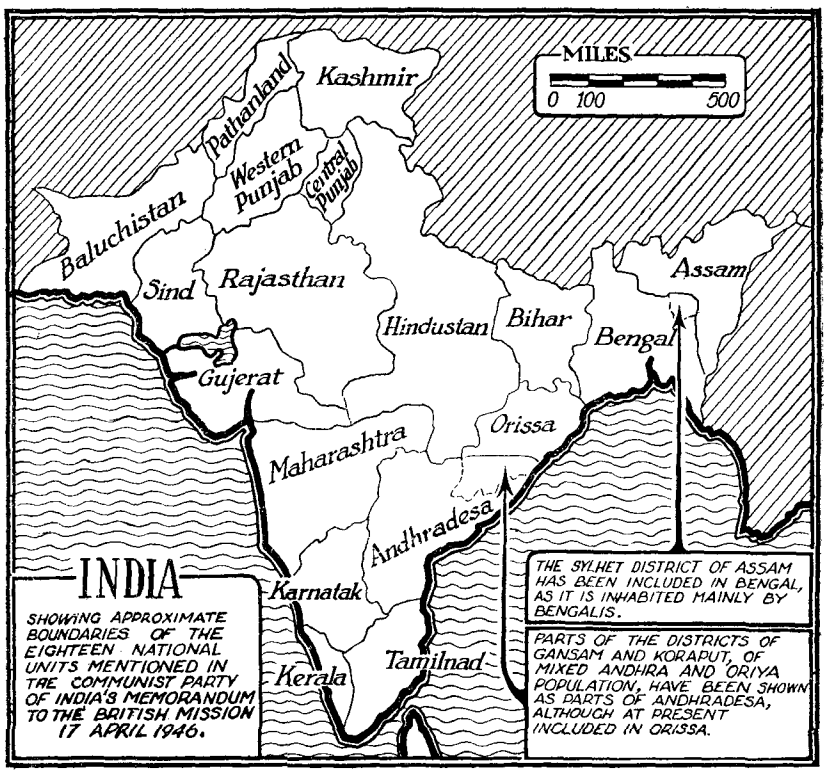
(*d*) Control of profits to ensure supply of goods at cheap prices to the people.

This Constituent Assembly declares that all army, police and civilian officers hereafter owe allegiance only to the Indian people and their representatives, and calls upon them to obey and carry out the orders of the Provisional Government in pursuance of the above programme.

It calls upon the people to be vigilant and report acts of intransigence and sabotage carried out by the bureaucrats and officials in the interest of their former masters so that such cases are speedily exposed and the culprits punished.

Sovereign Constituent Assembly

5. The Provisional Government, backed by the entire people in revolt, shall proceed to convene a sovereign and democratic Constituent Assembly, based on adult suffrage, proportional representation and the self-determination of national units.



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Pakistan and Indian Unity

6. Differences between the Indian National Congress and the All-India Muslim League on the question of Indian unity and Pakistan should be resolved by the vote of the people through the democratic application of the principle of national self-determination in the following manner:—

(i) The setting up of a Boundary Commission which proceeds immediately to redemarcate the existing Provinces and States, so that each such redemarcated unit, together with the contiguous States or parts of States, forms the unified homeland of a linguistically and culturally homogeneous people, and India is regrouped in national units such as Kerala, Karnatak, Andhradesh, Tamilnad, Maharashtra, Gujerat, Rajasthan, Hindustan, Bihar, Orissa, Bengal, Assam, Sindh, Baluchistan, the Punjab, Pathanland and Kashmir.

(ii) The recognition of the right of self-determination for Provinces redistributed as new national units by the Boundary Commission. The people of each such unit (and to begin with, the people of the redemarcated Provincial part thereof) will have the unfettered right of self-determination, i.e., the right to decide by the plebiscite of the entire adult population, whether they will join the Indian Union or form a separate State. Such plebiscites will be taken, wherever demanded, before a Union Constitution is actually framed.

The endeavour of the Sovereign Constituent Assembly should be to create a free Indian Union of national democratic republics—in which each constituent national republic will be free, equal and sovereign, and will have the right to secede.

The Indian States

7. The Constituent Assembly declares that the retention of 584 feudal autocrats ruling over one-third of the country is completely inconsistent with the principles of democracy, and demands that popular interim governments be formed at once in each one of these States; each of these governments should call a Constituent Assembly based on adult suffrage and proportional representation, to establish a democratic constitution and to decide the future status of the Ruler.

The same Constituent Assembly should elect delegates to the all-India Constituent Assembly.

The people of every State shall decide by a plebiscite whether the State as a whole or its corresponding parts, as the case may be, merge with the adjoining Province inhabited by the people of the same nationality.

Fundamental Rights

8. This Constituent Assembly declares that the recognition of the following Fundamental Rights and Principles should be the basis of the constitution framed by the sovereign Constituent Assembly, convened as above:—

(i) Right to bear arms.

(ii) Land to the tillers. Abolition of landlordism and all intermediary interests between the tiller and the State.

(iii) Right to work, ensured by rapid and all-round industrialisation and nationalisation of all key industries, big plantations, mines, means of transport and communication.

(iv) Eight-hour day, forty hour week, guarantee of living wage, equal pay for equal work, insurance against unemployment, sickness and old age, decent housing for all employees and other measures of social security, free compulsory education for all, equal rights for women.

(v) Right of association and organisation, right to strike, right to freedom of Press and speech.

(vi) Rights of Minorities:

All interspersed minorities in the new national units formed will have the rights regarding their language, education and culture guaranteed by statute, whose infringement would be punishable by law.

All disabilities, privileges and discrimination (such as untouchability) based on caste, race or community shall be abolished by statute, whose infringement would be punishable by law.

In order to ensure that all communities and political parties get their due representation in all legislation, administrative and executive organs the voting in all elections would be by

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adult suffrage and joint electorate with proportional representation.

Rapid advancement of backward communities and tribes in economic welfare, education and culture, so as to bring them to the level of the rest of the population, must be the first charge on all governments and administrative organs.

9. This Constituent Assembly calls upon the Indian people, irrespective of caste and creed, to stand behind the Provisional Government in the fulfilment of these tasks and in assertion of their Declaration of Independence to resist unitedly all attempts of the Imperialists to thwart the people's will.

Book Reviews

The Irish Question

Ireland Her Own by T. A. Jackson. (Cobbett Press, 1946, pp. xvi and 443, 18*s*).

"A NATION which oppresses another nation cannot itself be free." In this country that lesson has still to be learnt. If we may take as a measure of the political development of the British workers their activity in support of their fellow-workers in the colonies, exploited by the same ruling class, we see how much has still to be done to expose the real nature of imperialism and to show that we shall never win socialism at home so long as we continue to oppress other peoples in the colonies overseas. That is what makes this book so important.

Ireland is Britain's oldest and nearest colony. For many centuries, through English colonisation and Irish emigration, the two peoples have been in close touch with one another. In many of our industrial towns, such as Liverpool, Manchester and Glasgow, the population is largely of Irish extraction. The leaders of the Chartist movement, in which the British workers led the world, were two Irishmen, Bronterre O'Brien and Feargus O'Connor. And yet, for all the attention given to Irish affairs in the British press, Ireland might be a thousand miles away.

This is not an accident. It is a common interest of the capitalist class in Britain and Ireland alike that the two peoples should be parted by ignorance and misunderstanding. Irish boys and girls, mostly peasants driven by poverty from their homes, come over here, superstitious, unorganised, used to low wages, but bringing with them a burning hatred of imperialism sprung from a centuries-old national tradition. That is their message to the British workers, but they are not allowed to convey it. Their Catholic priests are always busy fostering their religious prejudices in order to prevent them being drawn into the British labour movement, and so only a few of them are able to take home the message that the British workers have for them. Meanwhile, taken on at non-union rates, they under-cut the British workers, who see them as a hindrance to trade union organisation and so are tempted to give ear to Protestant prelates denouncing the "low-grade Irish." By these sedulously-fostered suspicions and antagonisms the two peoples are kept apart, so that neither learns what the other has to teach.

Nor is that all. Many people in this country think the Irish question is solved. They forget that Ireland is divided by partition, maintained by British money and British arms. Many people in this country think that at the last general election the Tories were swept out of all their strongholds, never to return. They forget that the Tories are still firmly entrenched in Belfast, supported by an armed police force with the troops standing by. So long as that stronghold stands, they can always count on the hope of making the Six Counties their Morocco.

A secondary reason for the indifference to Irish affairs in this country is that Irish history has never been expounded from the standpoint of the British working-class. To quote from the preface to this book:—

Irish writers upon the subject have commonly been satisfied with

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destroying such shreds of credit the English expounders of the quarrel have contrived to save. Thus they have usually missed the real tragedy involved in Ireland's history—the manner in which the English and Irish common people, each of them struggling for freedom, have been time and again jockeyed into becoming weapons used by the exploiters, each for the enslavement of the other.

This book supplies the need. Starting with the tribal-feudal Ireland of pre-Norman times, the author guides us through the longest, bitterest, bravest struggle of national liberation in the whole of history. The story is so moving in itself that it would be hard to spoil in the telling, but here it is told with a vividness of detail and an intensity of conviction beyond the power of any merely academic historian. It is the work of one who has himself played a strenuous part in the struggle he records. "I have done my best," he writes, "to be candid, but impartiality is beyond my scope. My concern is to help forward the cause I uphold." The result is that this book will take its place by the side of Connolly's *Labour in Irish History* as a classic.

For the British workers it should be regarded as an indispensable part of any course of study on the national and colonial question. For the Irish workers it needs no recommendation. It will be passed from hand to hand, thumb-marked and dog-eared until it falls to pieces. In particular, it will help to expose the misrepresentations with which the Irish bourgeoisie have tried to obscure the true significance of the national tradition.

It only remains to regret that it was not found possible to produce such a book, intended for the workers, at a price the workers could afford, and to express the hope that it will be reissued in a cheap edition at the earliest possible moment.

GEORGE THOMSON.

Shorter Notice.

John Hilton by Edna Nixon (Allen & Unwin, 341 pp., 15*s*).

JOHN HILTON was known chiefly as a broadcaster, and it is therefore natural that half of this biography should be devoted to his broadcasting activities. He sprang from the working-class, and was always nearer to the workshop than to the study. It was this that made his talks so successful. They no doubt helped many thousands of working-class listeners; but they were more valuable to the ruling class, who used Hilton in the role of an "impartial third party."

It is significant that in a book about a professor of industrial relations no mention is made of trade unions. But Hilton was

> a hundred per cent. individualist, and he found it hard to understand that men might prefer to keep together, and if need be rot together, rather than strike out each for himself to find some means of salvation. (p. 86.)

Though he remained in touch with working-class feeling, it was as an individualist that he rose above his early surroundings.

H. H.

Publications Received

PAMPHLETS

Enemies of the Peace by Sender Garlin (New Century Publishers, New York, 10*c*, 48 pp.).
Atomic Energy and Social Progress by William Paul (Communist Party, 6*d*, 30 pp.).
The Communists Were Right (Communist Party, 3*d*., 16 pp.).
Exports Why and How (Labour Research Department, 6*d*, 24 pp.).

BOOKLETS

The Ethiopian People—Their Rights and Progress by Sylvia Pankhurst (*New Times and Ethiopia News*, 2*s*6*d*, 64 pp.).
In Germany Now by William Peters (Progress Publishing Co. Ltd., 3*s*6*d*, 115 pp.).
Polemos Kai Koinonia by Felix Fikioris (A. Karabia (Athens) 114 pp.).
Die Sowjetunion—eine grosse Industriemacht by E. Lokschin (Literaturvertrieb Zurich, Fr. 1.80, 100 pp.).
Spanien auf dem Weg zur Freiheit by Otto Brunner, Pasionaria, Antonio Mije (Literaturvertrieb Zurich, 50*rp*., 28 pp.).

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LABOUR MONTHLY GUARANTEE FUND

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Here are specimens of letters received from home and abroad. We begin with our first letter from the State of New Hampshire in the U.S.A.: "I have been receiving your L.M. regularly only since last summer. As a journalist of many trials I have long since stopped reading much, nor am I much of a hand-clapper, yet I must tell your publication—and yours alone—has surprised me by becoming an outstanding exception. I not only read it from cover to cover: but miss it when it's late in coming!"

Second is a letter from Leigh-on-Sea: "Herewith P.O. 6s.—contribution to the Guarantee Fund for March. Carry on the good work! The L.M. is now being vindicated by events, proving the workers' need of Marxism."

Third comes from a L.A.C. in the Royal Air Force, who from his hospital writes: "I like the new format—it's good, much better than I expected it to be. Please find enclosed donation to the Guarantee Fund."

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MISCELLANY No. 1

Editor: DR. JOHN LEWIS

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